

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #34

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 11 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this commercial fishing period. The cumulative sonar count through July 9 was 1.09 million fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 580,957–892,184 fish. The count from midnight through 6:00 am this morning was 2,102 fish, which projects to a daily total of 8,408 fish. The minimum inriver passage objective for today is 6,937 fish. For the week ending June 29, the actual Copper River delta survey index count was 39,660 versus an anticipated range of 17,627–41,665 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown this week. The hatchery contributions from the period that closed on June 29 were 48% Gulkana and 1% Main Bay Hatchery. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Saturday, July 6 was 83,000 sockeye salmon with 565 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 8,600 Chinook salmon and 1.44 million sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 11 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending June 29, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 17,100 versus a minimum anticipated range of 6,092–13,402 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Saturday, July 6.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 15. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, July 7 was 51,000 chum salmon with 127 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding the Bettles Bay Subdistrict and excluding the **WNH THA and SHA**, will open to commercial **DRIFT GILLNET** fishing for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11. **Waters of the WNH THA and SHA, excluding the WNH HEEZ, will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET and PURSE SEINE fishing for a 60-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11.** The WNH HEEZ consists of waters of Lake Bay north of a latitude line at 60°47.78'N. Regulation 5 AAC 24.368(f) states that "seine gear may be used in the Esther Subdistrict for the purpose of preventing the deterioration of fish quality of the harvestable surplus of chum salmon that is not being adequately harvested by the drift gillnet fleet". Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, July 6 was 236,000 chum and 9,000 sockeye salmon with 1,055 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 1.87 million chum and 68,000 sockeye salmon. As of July 3, PWSAC estimated 208,000-259,000 chum salmon in the WNH HEEZ. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish. The cumulative passage at the Coghill River weir through July 9 is 10,840 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated count of 11,583 fish. A total of 156,000 sockeye salmon are forecast to return to Coghill Lake, with 126,000 fish anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, **excluding the MBH SHA and AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11. Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, July 6 was 20,000 chum and 44,000 sockeye salmon with 415 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 196,000 chum and 430,000 sockeye salmon. A total of 1.13 million sockeye salmon are forecast to return to MBH. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 9.

SEINE FISHERIES: Please refer to the Coghill District section of this news release for information pertaining to commercial purse seine fishing opportunity in the Coghill District.

An aerial survey of the Eastern District and portions of the Northern and Southeastern districts was flown yesterday. Early season indicators of wild stock chum and pink salmon escapement in the Eastern and Southeastern districts are ahead of anticipated numbers and support a wild stock fishery at this time. An aerial survey of Coghill, Northwestern, Eshamy and Southeastern districts will be flown today. Harvest numbers from the July 7 purse seine fishery in the Eastern and Southeastern districts are unavailable at the time of this announcement; however, it is estimated that approximately 2 million pink salmon were harvested. Cumulative pink salmon harvest totals for the Eastern District through July 9 include approximately 1.5 million cost recovery fish, and between 10.3 and 10.8 million CPF fish. Time and area for future commercial fishing periods will be based on consideration for VFDA broodstock collection progress, harvest results from the July 11 and July 12 fisheries, and wild stock escapement indices.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for daily 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 11, and Friday, July 12. **Waters in Port Valdez, east of a line from 61° 05.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W and south of a line from 61° 06.00' N, 146° 21.50' W to 61° 06.00' N, 146° 15.10' W. will be closed during these fishing periods.** All waters of the Valdez small boat harbor and within 50 yards of the entrance to the harbor will be closed to commercial fishing. Waters within 200 yards of the AMHS Valdez Ferry Terminal will also be closed to commercial fishing when the ferry is arriving and departing. Waters within the Alyeska Marine Terminal (Trans Alaska Pipeline System) Security Zone are closed to commercial fishing. Anadromous stream closures south of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will be in effect. Anadromous stream closures and regulatory closed waters north of a line from Potato Point to Entrance Point will not be in effect.

Regulatory closed waters in Olsen Bay are being modified for the July 11 and July 12 fisheries. All waters of Olsen Bay north of a latitude of 60°44.50' N. will be closed to commercial fishing for the July 11 and July 12 fishing periods.

Waters inside of the following Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers are closed to commercial fishing during these periods to ensure early season escapement:

- (1) **Beartrap Bay:** north of a line from 60°45.13' N. lat., 146°06.12' W. long. to 60°44.51' N. lat., 146°04.57' W. long.; **this includes all waters of Port Gravina and Beartrap Bay north of this line;**
- (2) **Galena Bay:** east of a line from 60°56.87' N. lat., 146°39.87' W. long. to 60°56.55' N. lat., 146°39.65' W. long.;
- (3) **Jack Bay:** south and east of a line from 61°02.34' N. lat., 146°35.27' W. long. to 61°02.17' N. lat., 146°39.77' W. long.;
- (4) **Sawmill Bay:** north of a line from 61°02.71' N. lat., 146°46.44' W. long. to 61°02.58' N. lat., 146°47.07' W. long.

SHTF marker coordinates are available in the Cordova ADF&G office, and have been provided to area processors, VFDA and PWSAC for distribution to fishery participants.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 11, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 15. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. These openings are intended to target a forecast return of 6,400 remote release sockeye salmon. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 – August 1.

The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am Thursday, July 11 for 84 hours, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 15. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, July 7 is 6 Chinook, 4,110 sockeye, 1,980 pink, and 16,100 chum salmon with 6 deliveries reported. A total of 306,000 remote release chum salmon are forecast to return to the AFK Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial purse seine fishing for daily 14-hour fishing periods beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 8:00 pm on Thursday, July 11, and Friday, July 12.

Please refer to Prince William Sound News Release #26 from Thursday, June 27 for details regarding Prince William Sound anadromous stream closures. Electronic copies of the list and associated map detailing these updated regulatory closed waters are available at the following web address under the Prince William Sound Anadromous Waters Closures heading:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.salmon#/maps>

Copies of the list and map are also available in the Cordova ADF&G office.

Please refer to the ADF&G 2012-2015 Commercial Salmon Fishing Regulations for Prince William Sound booklet for regulations regarding commercial salmon fisheries in the Prince William Sound Area. This booklet is available in the Cordova ADF&G office and at the following web address:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/pdfs/commercial/PWSSalmon-2012-2015.pdf>

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Friday, July 12.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.